

Let's Get Acquainted

by Ruby Compton
Wave Columnist

In writing of my great grandparents, James and Sarah Ferguson McDonald, I must refer to our family records, this necessitates use of the same records as were used by another of their great granddaughters, Ila May Fisher Maughan, of Salt Lake City, Utah, who wrote a beautiful book, published in 1964, about James and Sarah's Progenitors, their own life and that of their posterity. The book was mainly sold to members of the McDonald family and had but one printing.

I am making public a condensed story of James and Sarah McDonald, and how Sarah and her children came to be early settlers of Heber Valley.

James McDonald was born June 1, 1802, in Crawfordsburn, County Down, Ireland. Sarah was born in Down County, Ireland, on October 13, 1802. They were married in late 1825 - or early 1826 and settled in Crawfordsburn to raise their family. James had learned the art of treating flax as it was prepared for the Irish Linen Mills, and had been a frugal, self-disciplined young man so he was able to lease some land from Sherman Crawford and build a comfortable house upon this land. He was permitted by law to own his house, equipment and animals, but all land was owned by ancestral

immigrants to various places where they could live.

As James and family had used all their money by this time, they chose to live in an abandoned cabin, there were no windows or doors. By spring the house was in good repair and the spring crops were planted. They were active in the church, and James found work at a flour mill, the two older boys herded cows, later John carried water and other supplies to masons and carpenters as they worked on the Nauvoo Temple. They lived three years in the repaired cabin before they were driven out by the mob in 1846. It was hard to leave Nauvoo as their son David had died there and their baby, Hyrum, had been born and buried there too. The people of Nauvoo were not permitted to take any possessions with them, but Sarah was able to hide a loaf of freshly baked bread under her apron before she and her family were escorted across the Mississippi River and left to fend for themselves.

With the help of Brother George Holmes and his aging team of oxen, the McDonald family moved to Bonapart, on the Des Moines River, thirty miles away. They probably spent the rest of the winter there before traveling on to the west.

As the pioneers advanced, they planted crops to be harvested by those who followed.

morning before the camp moved on.

I take a quote from Ila May Fisher Maughan's book: "Elizabeth Wallis understood the grief of the pioneers when she wrote: Lay him down tenderly under the willows,
Dampen the warm brown earth with your tears,
Then turn your face again to the prairie,
Harden your heart to the lonely years..."

Sarah was ridden with shock and grief. Jane and John took over the driving of the wagons, while Eliza, William, Robert and Mary trailed the livestock. Joseph stayed close to his mother to attend to her needs. The time seemed very long until they arrived in the great Salt Lake valley.

It took six weeks to replenish their supplies and decide where to live. Most of the Aaron Johnson company went on to Springville, but the McDonald's chose to settle in what is now called Alpine. There were only trails to the area and no houses. They built a log cabin and set up a home. Jane and Eliza, the two older girls, decided to stay in Salt Lake and continue with the work they had found.

Elizabeth McDonald married William Morgan Clyde in February 1851, in her mother's home; they were the first couple to be married in Alpine. They moved on

of the family friends had found success. John wanted to go too but decided to stay on and harvest the crop for his mother. As it turned out, Robert got as far as Parowan, Utah, when he met and married Sarah Shirts. Sarah was relieved. Jane married Eliza's

brother-in-law, George Washington Clyde, in the fall of 1851, in Springville. The Clyde brothers owned land close to one another. In 1854, Mary married John Hamilton and went to live at Hamilton Fort, Utah. On December 16, 1856, John McDonald married Lucinda Cole, the Cole's had been part of the Aaron Johnson Company. They were part of the group who came straight on to Springville.

After their harvests were

gathered in the fall of 1859, John and George W. Clyde came to investigate what is now called Heber Valley. They were impressed and built two log cabins, then they returned to Springville. The next summer they came to Heber to live. George brought Jane to see the cabin then she returned to her home until after her baby was born. This was their fifth child and it was born in August of 1860. Then she bid her mother and sister, Eliza, goodbye and moved from her comfortable home to the cabin in Heber.

Eliza never moved from Springville, she was to become the great grandmother of many, but two of them were George Dewey Clyde, Governor of Utah and W. W. Clyde, a prominent road construct-

The family was industrious before their conversion, but after that they worked even harder and saved all they could toward moving to the U.S.A. so they could settle with the main body of the people who accepted the teachings of the L.D.S. Church.

On October 16, 1842, in the midst of the preparations for their journey, their son, whom they named Joseph Smith McDonald, was born. In January of 1844, James sold his house for 40 guineas and other possessions they could not take with them, and the family traveled the 10 miles to Belfast, Ireland where they entered a ship and sailed across to Liverpool, England. They immediately booked passage on an ocean-going sailboat named Fanny. They were aboard ship three or four days before leaving for U.S.A. On arriving at New Orleans. They left Liverpool on Jan. 28, 1844, there were 210 L.D.S. church members aboard with their worldly possessions.

Captain Patterson and crew members said this was their best "crossing" ever; however, they were involved in a dangerous storm at one time and becalmed for several days at another. They were becalmed in the bay at New Orleans, U.S.A. and they had to wait for a large steamer to pass before landing at 7 a.m. on March 7, 1844. Their journey up the Mississippi was on the Maid of Iowa, a church owned vessel which took them to Nauvoo.

As it was raining when they arrived on a Saturday, April 13, 1844 at 5 p.m. so they spent the night aboard ship. Just across from their landing strip was the Nauvoo House. The following day, Sunday, Joseph Smith came aboard the Maid of Iowa and gave a sermon. The immigrants were very pleased in their first meeting with their Prophet.

On Monday, Hyrum Smith, brother of Joseph, led the

This was in the spring of 1850. The James McDonald's had six oxen, two sturdy wagons loaded with clothing, bedding, food supplies and seed for planting. Jane, the oldest, was now 23 years old and Joseph, the youngest living child was seven years old.

The plains were crowded that year, the gold rush was on, and there were 5,000 L.D.S. members headed for Utah. The trails were dry and dusty, but the Aaron Johnson Company moved right along. The company rules were simple: 1. It's the duty of captain and council to provide feed and hay for cattle and horses; 2. All retire at 9 p.m. and arise at sunrise; 3. Each man take his turn to watch camp and cattle. 4. The camp will come together at 8 p.m. for prayer. 5. There will be no swearing by said company. 6. No shooting allowed within 20 rods of said company. No loaded guns within the company except by order of officers. No loose powder allowed near fires or in the wagons. 7. The company commence traveling by 7 in the morning. 8. That each and all help each other in case of sickness, or broken wagons or any such accident as may happen. Each had a responsibility to do whatever was asked of them.

There was a lot of singing and laughter along the way. Until Colera struck. On the morning of June 17, 1850, James assisted in the grave digging for one of their group while Sarah cared for the three children whose mother was buried. The company moved on to where the trail led across the Loup River, the 2nd tributary of the North Platte River. Some of the older children waded the stream with their father to help steady the oxen and lighten the loads of the two wagons. When the camp was settled on the opposite bank that evening, James suddenly became very ill and died that night. He was buried the next



ion contractor.

George and Jane Clyde's son James W. Clyde set up the first bank in Wasatch County. Others became successful sheep and cattle men. Mary and John Hamilton, Robert and Sarah Shirts returned and lived in the Fort of Heber, and Sarah came to live in the home her children built for her. After the Indian wars were over, each of her children and grandchildren were doing well in their marriages and businesses. Sarah was 60 years old.

The last of Sarah's children, Joseph, married Nancy Elizabeth Cummings in 1863. His brothers helped him build his home on 4th North and 1st West corner.

Sarah Jane was buried in Heber City cemetery.

they were parents of seven children at the time Elder David Wilkie and his companion brought the message of the LDS Church in 1841, and their home became a gathering place for the little LDS branch of the church.

near Council Bluffs for three years. They prepared for their journey to Salt Lake City. Their Bishop Aaron Johnson, of Kanesville headed up a company of his own name, and the James McDonald family joined him along with many others to go on west.

Sarah, Jane and the rest of the family moved on to Springfield in March of 1851. They drew land near Eliza and planted their spring crops and built a home. Robert had decided he would go on to the gold fields of California where one